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The Italian Hold-up of Turkey.

The ultimatum sent by Italy to Turkey, on September 28, in regard to Tripoli, astonished and disgusted the world. The reasons assigned by the Italian government for the unexpected and violent hold-up of Turkey across the Mediterranean have not commended themselves to the world-public, not even to that portion of it which is usually not over-scrupulous about the intervention of strong powers in the affairs of weaker ones. Italy's lawlessness—for that is the true name of it—has been condemned by nearly all the respectable journals of the civilized countries—in England, France, Germany, the United States, etc. From every point of view the action has been judged to be indefensible. There had been, so far as the facts are known, no such exaggerated opposition to Italian citizens and Italian interests in Tripoli as the ultimatum laid emphasis upon. Nor does the Italian government appear to have made any effort whatever to secure an adjust-

ment of the difficulties through the Hague institutions, which she had had an honorable share in creating. It seems, therefore, that her act in going to war after only 24 hours' notice and at once invading the country was nothing less than brigandage, pure and simple. The case against her has not been more clearly and strongly put than by an Italian paper, *Il Secolo*, one of the most prominent dailies in the peninsula. Speaking of the ultimatum it says, as given in the *Arbitrator*:

"With a like plea tomorrow some more civilized, stronger, wealthier and war-prepared power could say to us, 'You have left half Italy in disorder and abandonment. Your southern regions welter in misery, illiteracy, political corruption and superstition; roads, aqueducts and every other means for exploiting their enormous latent wealth are lacking; we are going to take possession in order to introduce civilization there.' What should we reply?

"We should answer that, civilized or uncivilized, good or bad administrators, poor or inept, we intended before all else to be masters in our own house. Every country has the right to attend to its own regeneration. No one maintains that Turkey today has fallen into such a state of barbarism and dismemberment as to authorize other European powers, under the pretext of civilization, to wrench away this or that province on the plea of introducing good government.

"We refrain from sadder and more bitter reflections on this topic which we are tempted to pen. Italy's ultimatum protests that our commercial enterprises have always met with systematic opposition in Tripoli, but the stupefied world will demand of us today what have been or are these grandiose commercial undertakings of ours. In the whole of Tripoli we have 600 or 700 Italians, and the only undertaking we know of is that of the Bank of Rome. What activities of our fellow-countrymen there have been so far seriously thwarted by Turkish authorities? The ultimatum does not cite a single case.

"Our eagerness to secure contracts for mines, agricultural schemes and construction of roads and ports was justly calculated to arouse Turkish suspicions, when for years past it has been shouted on the housetops throughout Italy that our real and final object was to take possession of Tripoli itself."

That last line exposes the real ground for the ultimatum and the invasion. Nearly all the rest was pretext and deception, if one may judge by what has followed. Italy wanted Tripoli, and she decided to take advantage of Turkey's distraction and weakness and seize it. It was high-handed robbery, of which none of us in advance would have believed modern Italy capable.

The Turkish government's reply to the ultimatum shows a spirit of almost ideal fairness and honorableness in comparison with Italy's base and brutal conduct, and gives just ground for believing that, under the new régime, the Turkish empire is, in spite of the deadly incubus left by the old order, making real progress in civilization. Here it is:

"The Royal Embassy is aware of the manifold difficulties of circumstance which have not allowed Tripoli and Cyrenaica to take advantage of the benefits of progress. An impartial consideration of affairs is enough to show that the Ottoman Constitutional Government cannot be held liable for a situation which is the work of the old *régime*. That being laid down, the Sublime Porte, in recapitulating the course of the three last years, searches in vain for circumstances in which it has shown itself hostile to Italian enterprises concerning Tripoli and Cyrenaica. Quite the contrary, it has always appeared to it normal and rational that Italy should co-operate with her capital and industrial activity in the economic uplifting of this part of the empire.

"Reduced to these essential terms, the present disagreement resides in the absence of guarantees calculated to reassure the Italian Government as to the economic expansion of its interests in Tripoli and Cyrenaica. In not proceeding to so grave an act as a military occupation, the Royal Government will be met by the Sublime Porte with the firm desire to smooth away this disagreement.

"Thus, impartially, the Imperial Government may acquaint it with the nature of these guarantees to which it will willingly subscribe so long as they do not affect its territorial integrity.

"It undertakes to this end not to modify in any way whatsoever during the *pourparlers* the present situation in Tripoli and Cyrenaica in military respects, and it would like to hope that the Royal Government, yielding to the sincere dispositions of the Sublime Porte, will acquiesce in this proposal."

The answer to this reasonable request was the *belohing* of Italian warships and the seizing of the coast towns of Tripoli.

But Italy is not wholly to blame for the situation which she has brought on. Back of it lies the imperial, conscienceless territorial extension policy which all the great powers of Europe have almost habitually followed. She was tempted and urged on by the Fez expedition of France, the Agadir conduct of Germany, the seizure of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria, to go no further into the dismal history of aggression upon weaker powers of which the powerful nations have practically all been guilty. Here is to be found the secret of the indifference of Europe to what Italy has been doing. Three or four of the powers might easily, acting under the authority of the Hague conventions, have checked the hand of Italy before the stiletto fell. But the nerve of their sense of justice and of responsibility for international order and peace had been paralyzed by the hideous presence of the blood spots on their own hands. This it is which makes the whole situation so heartrending and discouraging, and not the mere fact that an individual robber has sallied forth from

the den and fallen upon a helpless, or seemingly helpless, victim.

From present indications it looks as if Italy will have to pay dearly for the crime which she has committed. Hundreds of men are being shot to death in the fierce encounters between her troops and the Turks and Arabs, beyond the towns of the coast, and nobody can guess when the horrible sacrifice of lives and the swift consumption of wealth will end. Hot, senseless passion is in the saddle, and the results will be what they have always been in such cases.

The one encouraging feature of the situation is the revelation of the widespread and ever-deepening hatred of international injustice and war which Italy's conduct has occasioned in all countries. The enlightened public sentiment of the world is moving fast toward the day when it will be impossible for any nation to defy it, to ignore the Hague common laws, and plunge the whole body of civilized men into the abyss of shame and disgrace, as Italy has just done.

The Centenary of John Bright.

The 16th of this month will be the centenary of the birth of one of the ablest, purest, and noblest men that ever wrought in the fields of peace, John Bright. We are glad to be able to publish in this issue an appreciative article on John Bright and his services to the cause of peace, from the pen of one who has given much time and labor to the study and interpretation of his character and work and who hopes, in time, to give us a larger treatise on Mr. Bright's life.

We have not space in this number of our journal to enter into any lengthy editorial presentation of Bright's remarkable character and work; nor indeed is this necessary. We wish only to say, in extension of what Mr. Van Eps writes, that the most appropriate method of commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the illustrious peace statesman's birth would not be the holding of public meetings and the pronouncing of lengthy eulogies upon him, worthy as he was of the very best that could be done in this line. A far more fitting observance of the anniversary would be the rereading by all—especially by all statesmen—who are interested in the peace cause, of Mr. Bright's various speeches on the subject, and a new and more earnest endeavor to secure the incorporation of his policies in the international politics of our day. Time has proved Mr. Bright to have been right in the positions which he took on the unfortunate courses which his country followed in the foreign politics of his day, the Crimean war, etc. Indeed, his contentions were so deeply rooted in essential justice and political morality that they are as applicable to the international questions of our day as they were during his lifetime. The world has not yet reached, nor does it seem likely soon to reach, the level of Mr. Bright's lofty political ideals. For this reason our present-day publicists and statesmen will find the perusal of his speeches and the study of the spirit in which he made them of very great aid in their efforts further to promote justice and brotherhood in the relations of nations.